

BULGARIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES  
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND MUSEUM

TUTRAKAN HISTORY MUSEUM

# THE LOWER DANUBE IN ANTIQUITY (VI C BC – VI C AD)



SOFIA 2007

## RECOGNIZING THE GOTHES ON LOWER DANUBE THE NEED OF THEORETICAL MODEL

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“The Goths despise death while praising the wound, also this: The Goth – he says – he goes with his horse ... I am the one ... the one who Alexander said to be avoided, who Pyrrhus feared, and for whom Caesar trembled. Of us, Jerome said: He has a horn in his head, flee far away. And so do not talk of mad dogs and recognize yourself as a snarling fox... and do not say I am compiler of ancients which is appropriate for people of great power.”

*Álvaro of Córdoba to Eleazar (middle of 9<sup>th</sup> century)*

Sweden could be determined as a cradle of the romanticized Gothic fiction. The proclamation of Swedish kings and nation found its base not only in the period of Olofus Rudbeck or Gustavus Adolphus II, who proclaimed Sweden as Great Power, but even later in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century the *Storgöticism* had become a revival tendency and reaction against enlightenment. It first received coherent literary expression in Spain, where the strength of Gothic tradition appeared in the works of Jordanes, Isidore of Seville and Jeminez de Rada; and it was the Spanish *storgöticism* which provoked the first classic exposition of the creed from the Swedish side (Roberts 1954, 509). This ideology gave to the whole nation a stimulus that does something to explain the extraordinary outburst of national energy in the seventeenth century. Thus “the Goths” stayed in the foundation of the legislation of Swedish, viewed as a restoration of ascendancy of overlordship in Europe (Roberts 1954, 513; Hillebrecht 1997, 5-7). Two hundred years later the purposes of the so-called Gothic Union were the same. The “Goths” desired to reinvigorate Sweden, which had been weakened by the misfortunes of recent years, particularly the loss of Finland, by reviving in the people the former strength and spirit of freedom (Hallendorff/Schueck 1929, 433).

A desire to attach an identity to particular objects or monuments, most frequently expressed in terms of the ethnic group or “people” who produced them, has figured at the heart of archeological enquiry. From the Renaissance period on-

wards archaeological material has been attributed to historically attested peoples. Moreover, the development of nationalism during the nineteenth century provided fertile ground for an escalation of interest in the archaeological remains, and in particular to tracing their national or ethnic pedigree (Jones 1997, 15). The diversion of archaeology and anthropology to nationalist ends has been unfairly related implicitly to German science. Nationalism, for a long a liberal political claim, became gradually, a reactionary ideology, opposed to the Marxist ideas of classificatory and typological societies.

By the early decades of the twentieth century such interest had become explicitly formulated in the methodological principle that archaeological culture areas reflect the past “peoples” or ethnic groups, especially in the works of Gustaff Kossinna and Vere Gordon Childe.

Kossinna defined and systematically applied the concept of an archaeological culture in conjunction with the “direct ethno-historical” method. His “settlement archaeology” was based on the axiom that “Cultural provinces clearly outlined archaeologically coincide in all periods with precise peoples or tribes” (Kossinna 1911, 3). Culture was thus a homogenous, biological entity, conceived on the model of the modern Nation-state. He died in 1931, too early to be compromised by Nazism. Many archaeologists acknowledged his reputation, as the most important among them was Gordon Childe, who used the Kossinna’s concept of cultures, to the point that the two men have been compared historiographi-

cally without creating a paradox or convicting the works of Childe.

The archaeological studies had demonstrated that ethnic identity was not so easy to define, but it was still regarded as an objective category. Research at this point concentrated on assembling a checklist of concrete categories: biological self-perpetuation, fundamental social values, interaction and communication, and especially self-identification and identification by others. The underlying assumption was that, examined under such headings, a particular social group would display an unique set of objective cultural features, the component parts of its ethnic identity, which will distinguish it absolutely from surrounding groups (Heather 1998, 3).

Since the Second World War, the concepts of identity have been transformed by two main lines of research. According to the view of instrumental position identities are not innate and unchangeable, but a product of personal choice and they develop in response to functional organisational requirements (Barth 1969, 17-18; Cohen 1974, ix-xxiv).

The second line of research - the so called "primordialist" approach - took its stand on closer observation of individuals, rather than the study of groups. The primordialists have demonstrated that inherited senses of identity cannot be determined as requested by someone, but push individuals to act with common with others, sharing the same sense of identity, against the more obvious dictates of material calculation. Differences as blood, speech, social practise, and history can act as real barriers to individuals, wishing to change their identity in subsequent generations. According to the primordialists there are six criteria of ethnic community or *ethnie*:

1. A collective ethnic or national name
2. A group's myth of past and origin
3. Shared historical memory
4. One or more typical elements of common material and mental culture
5. A connection with land and *patria*
6. A sense of solidarity that includes considerable parts of population (Shirokogoroff 1936, 89; Smith 1991, 35).

As much as any group of population shares these elements as its sense of identity and cultural community is stronger (Smith 1991, 36).

Investigating the written sources about the

Goths, the researcher usually remains with the impression that the Goths partly or entirely cover all the six elements. However there are two general presumptions. First, the ethnic identity is fluid. This fluidity finds expression in selection of markers of identity, the salience, meaning and application of markers, the definition of borders, the meaning of identity itself in multiple identity and ambivalence (Pieterse 1997, 381). Its obvious components - the group's myth or symbol complex - are bound to change over time. The "myth" component is not entirely historical but is a reflection of the continuity experiences of the group, changing as new episodes are added to its history. Continuity in group identity cannot be measured by the persistence of individual cultural traits, but by the transmission over time of individual perception of difference: the claim to a particular identity on the part of a number of individuals and the recognition of that claim by others (Heather 1998, 6).

The attempts to identify the Goths historically and ethnically usually come upon several problems of hard solution. The main problem resulted from the fact that the thesis about the origin or future ethnic constitution lies on the historical base of Cassiodorus, as *Origo Gothica* has been searched in *Historia Romana* and the home sagas were rendered by the methods of Roman historiography (according to Cassiodorus' words the writings of king Athalarich helped that the Gothic history became Roman "*Originem Gothicam historiam fecit esse Romanam*") (Cassiodor, *Variae* IX 25, 5, Wofram 2001, 16, Anm. 21). Formally *Cassiodorus* was at work as a compiler of antique and gothic traditions, as the same could be considered for *Iordanes*. This was the first writing, concerning the origin of non-antique people, who ruled a part of the Roman Empire and was legitimated by the emperor. *Cassiodorus* bound the Gothic history with the overall Roman history, thus submitting a "legalized" origin (Heather 1989, 109. Wolfram 2001, 16).

The written sources clearly explain that in the early stages of ethnoformation, the polyethnism was of decisive significance. As a rule, the ethnic groups did not appear as finished formation, as well in territorial aspect, they had never covered all possible representatives, but included also foreign elements. The cause about their

formation stays not in blood, but within the circumstances. According to the authority of Reinhrad Wenskus and some modern researchers this presumption does not suppose anything else but the unity of heterogeneous groups under a barbarian leader. The leader and the aristocracy with divine origin, compose the traditional core (*Traditionskern*), which unites the ethnic groups and they take their identity from the royal family. The one who believes in this tradition, born within the community or joined to it after by means of persuasion, becomes a part of the *gens* and belongs to it not according to his blood but after the tradition (Wenskus, 1977, 14; Geary 2001, 108).

The way that the antique writers, scholars, historians, jurists and poets perceived the barbarian people outside and inside the Roman Empire, that's to say what identity was recognised in barbarians by the Romans, is of decisive significance. Most of them hardly definite the notions as ethnic identity, tribe or state. They often use the concepts of *gens*, *natio* and *populus* far of the sense, used by the modern anthropologist or historian. However on his side, the modern investigator is inclined to measure the historic ethnic groups with anachronical criteria, since in the today present definition of ethnic identity, the idea of common culture or language is dominating.

Today we know the concepts, used by the antique writers. *Gens*, which means tribe or people does not precise the concept. The Roman writers are not too correct analyzators of non-Roman societies and seldom recognize the socio-politic changes in them. The greatest changes of the Migration period are subjectively observed and presented. The Roman authors artificially tried to unite the multitude of the tribes that are staying on the Roman borders, determining them with common names. The name *Germani* summarizes a group of tribes more according to a geographical indication than ethnographical one. *Cassius Dio* for instance wrote in this sense that emperor Marcus Aurelius, defeating the *Marcomanni*, took the title *Germanicus*, because the Romans called all the people, inhabiting the North regions *Germani* (Hummer 1998, 4). Another factor of uncertainty is the tendentious attitude of some Greek or Latin authors towards some barbarian people. *Agathias*, writing in 6<sup>th</sup> c. cited a part of composed in the beginning of 3<sup>rd</sup> c. his-

tory of *Asinius Quadratus*, according to which the *Alemanni* in the very beginning of their history were polyethnic and the their name reflected a hybrid ethnic formation. However *Agathias* subjectively used this information also for the time of 6<sup>th</sup> c., opposing the catholic Franks with their written laws to their rivals - the pagans and unorganized *Alemanni* (*Agathias, Historiarum libri quinque*, 1.6.3, Hummer 1998, 5, n. 14). Of course the reason for tendentious attitude was the reason that these *ethne* or *gentes* did not belong to the high culture of their observers. The antique historiography eloquent perceived the barbarian identity as something fluid, because if some tribe was conquered, immediately another one changed it, coming from the German forests or Scythian steppes. It is clear that these were not entirely new ethnic groups, but descendants of the older, which united with other elements, constituted a group under a new name (Hachmann 1970, 94).

The way of self identification of Goths is also fixable thanks to the Greek and Latin sources. After *Iordanes* this is a "history about the deeds of brave men" (*virorum fortium facta*) (*Iordanes, De origine actibusque Getarum*, 315; Скрижинская 2001, 121, 174). That is to say first of all they are warriors "*exercitus Gothorum*". The Romans perceived them basically as army with typical features. The long influences of the cultural interactions with Sarmathians, built the characteristic appearance of the Gothic warrior, as well as in his armament and his warrior spirit and morality (see the recent research of the problem with comprehensive bibliographical review in Müller 1998, 75-99). The features in the way of fighting of separate ethnic groups were well known to some antique authors and they demonstrated it in several written sources:

In his writings about the battle of *Nedao* (454), *Iordanes* clearly differentiated the typical armament among the *Alaniae*, Goths, *Gepidae* or *Huns* ("And so the bravest nations tore themselves to pieces. For then, I think, must have occurred a most remarkable spectacle, where one might see the Goths fighting with pikes (*conti*), the *Gepidae* raging with the sword, the *Rugi* breaking off the spears in their own wounds, the *Suavi* fighting on foot, the *Huns* with bows, the *Alani* drawing up a battle-line of heavy-armed and the *Heruli* of light-armed warriors")

(Iordanes, *De origine actibusque Getarum*, 261; Скрижинская 2001, 121, 165). Priscus described a situation of captured in a valley barbarians, who Romans had divided in ethnic groups according to their weaponry (Priscus, fr. 49; Schwarcz 1992, 52). Olympiodorus states that in *Moesia Inferior* stayed three sculptures of Sarmatian, Hun and Goth with their typical features. Also according to the written sources the Goths were too conservative in this respect – before the catastrophe at *Busta Gallorum* (552) king Totila ordered none to take another weapon except long pike (*contus*), that's to say his confidence in the possibilities of heavy Gothic cavalry against the well trained Byzantine archers was too strong (Procopius, *De bello Gothico*, IV (VII), 32,7; Wolfram 2001, 303, 359).

The considerable changes in the ethnic formation of Goths, began with their aspirations to build a state of *foederati* inside the Roman empire. Thus they were recognized as allies and associated with the imperial official and military institutions. The old formations, similar to the traditional military and tribal unions could not survive. Therefore the old tribal structures are not lasting. They must be forsaken, and the barbarians become a part of the Roman world. The institution that made this transition was the Gothic royal power. In spite of all oppositions and disasters, the kings of *Amal* and *Baltha* dynasties have ever succeeded to approve and strengthened their position as “offspring of Gods and heroes”. Their successes also depended by the fact that in difference to their noble colleagues they better used the circumstances and get the imperial legalization. These rulers were the first ones that identified themselves as Goths, that's to say their self-identification was associated with the people they ruled (Wolfram 2001, 21). They composed codes, the so called *Breviaria*, that had been build as well as on the Roman law, as on their own unwritten tradition, thus demonstrating the continuity with the older states (Goffart 1980, 305; Matthews 2000, 33). The idea about the bound of kingdom and its population is clearly developed through the words of the Visigothic king Athaulf, who often repeated that his first purpose was *Romania* to become *Gothia* (“At first I wanted to erase the Roman name and convert all Roman territory into a Gothic Empire: I longed for *Romania* to become *Gothia*, and

Athaulf to be what Caesar Augustus had been”) (Paulus Orosius, *Historia adversus Paganos*, 7,43,4; Williams 2000, 218; Matthews, 2000 31-32, n. 1). The Gothic royal power had its successes namely in the cases when the kings succeeded to settle a great part of their people on the imperial territories. The possibilities for new ethnic formation were predetermined by the establishment of a Latin-Barbarian *Regnum*, which for a long period, inherited the West Roman Empire. The kingdoms in Spain, Gaul and Italy had different fate. Compared with the unstable in territorial aspect Ostrogothic state, the Visigothic kingdom remained surprisingly stable. In spite of the defeats it transformed in an Early Medieval *Regnum*, as the idea for ethnicity in a new sense was connected not only with the victorious king but also with the state community.

The concept of *Gens*, used by the Latin authors could determine a great tribal group, but also a confederation of more ethnies. In the age of Migration period *Gens* was unfinished territorial and political entity; a continuing and opened process of national identity rather than a historical event. A *Gens* in stadium of formation always stays in migration “*in peregrinatione*”, and becomes *populus* through the kingdom and conservation of the faith. In the case of the Gothic history we see an example of union between tribal society with powerful state. The late antique Roman Empire could be determined as an example for powerful state. The territorial element *patria* was the major factor inside its borders and *populus* was legitimated through it. The formula *Patria vel gens Gothorum* demonstrates the transition made by Visigoths, which they finished their “Scythian” tribal identity from the Migration period. The “Scythian” definition means that ethnic groups in formation have not stable inner structure. Or as Synesios from *Kyrene* said to his emperor Arcadius - “there are not new barbarians”. They take new names and change their appearance to in order to lie the Romans and the world of civilization; however since the days of *Herodotus* the Scythians have remained the same. Hundred years after *Synesios*, it became possible to change the traditional name of *Scythae* with the one of the Goths: the polyethnic unions of rider warriors, coming from the steppes, now were considered as Goths (Wolfram 2001, 24-25).



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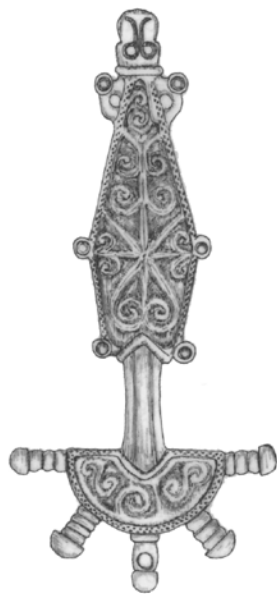
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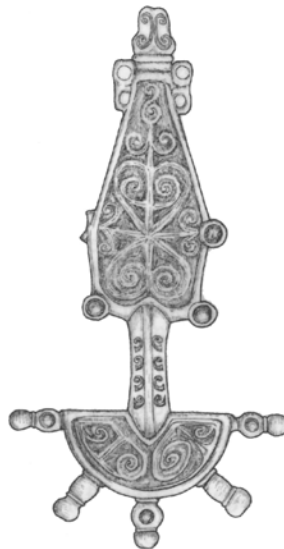
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The ever-demonstrated heterogeneity of the ethnics, staying on the Roman borders in no way means that inside these groups had no any stable structure and even light concept of identity to some tribe or ethne. The separate groups of artifacts demonstrate similarity in territorial, chronological, formal, technical and stylistic aspects. The uncertainty in the identification of these artifacts is a reflection of the whole uncertainty and "growing pessimism" within the historical ethnography and the archaeological approach.

Among the artifacts, reflecting the Gothic attendance in Europe, these from the "second stage" of Gothic ethnogenesis (after the middle of 5<sup>th</sup> c.) are the most important ones. Several of them are too indicative as well for the researchers, stressing the fluidity of barbarian identity, as for the ones that prefer to use more clear definitions. A preferred sample, especially for the first group of scholars is the niche-graves of Sarmatho-alanian type, where the deceased wears elements, which are typical for the dress of East Germans (Vagalinski et al. 2000, 86). That is the case with grave 315 from Eski-Kermen cemetery in Southeast Crimea (Айбабин 1991, 43-45, обр. 2, 10, 3; Ajbabin 1994, 130-131, Fig. II,42-43). The grave is of typical sarmathic type that has never been used by the Goths, outside Crimea. The orientation is in opposition of the Christian one, though we know that the Goths were confident in Christianity. The logical question would be "Who rests in the grave?" Perhaps a German, turned to pagans or sarmathic woman, dressed in German clothes? The answer could not be conclusive and it brings lots of risks for the researcher. However it is a matter a fact that the Goths and the East Germans in general kept the pattern of their typical dress, as it has been described since the time of Tacitus, that's to say for seven hundred years. Its elements could be seen in the early phases of Wielbark culture and also in some later complexes in Crimea and France. On the other hand the Goths were too apprehensive to foreign influences, especially in religion. Several cases of return to paganism had been recorded in many of the burials dated to the forty years period of Hun supremacy. This is the North orientation, the input of sacrificial food and gifts like mirrors. A clear example of Gothic religious apprehensiveness was the adoption of Islam by the Goths of

Crimea in the late 18<sup>th</sup> c. They preferred it instead to abandon the land they have inhabited for over one thousand five hundred years (Пиоро 1990, 112).

The artifacts of Eski-Kermen belonged to the female dress. Women were the wearers and keepers of conservatism and domestic traditions within the typical ancient German societies. In present days the concept of *Trachtarchäologie* (Dress archaeology), opposed to *Siedlungsarchäologie* (Spatial archaeology) of Kossinna, reflects in large scale the worked out accord in archeology, that nothing could be more representative for the Gothic culture than elements of female dress. Their formal and stylistic development, production technique and chronology became the subject of main interest among the researchers working in the second half of 20<sup>th</sup> c. The development of their determination by leading European authorities ran descending from taking them as objective category though the lack of theoretical base to their rejection as possibility to identify an exact ethnic group and growing uncertainty in the opportunities of archaeology. Clearly, the scheme follows the model of Kossinna about the outlined geographical areas of East German attendance and plain ethnical identification of the artifacts. In their fundamental works Ernst Benninger, Herbert Kühn and Joachim Werner did not hesitate to connect the finds with the relevant ethnies of Visigoths, Ostrogoths, Gepidae, Lombards. Certainly, the interest and preference were given mainly to the Ostrogoths (Werner 1961, 68-75). The Slovak Jaroslav Tejral was the first one who expressed a doubt in this system. He followed the geographical distribution of typical "ostrogothic" artifacts and noted that several of them has been discovered in territories, where according to the written sources this ethnos had never attended. That's why Tejral rendered that their appearance was due to cultural innovations, infiltrated among the rest of the East Germans, thanks to the strong gothic influence (Tejral 1982, 242).

Following the ideas of his predecessors Volker Bierbrauer composed the too important work, concerning the ostrogothic artifacts in Italy. He used an identical sheme - terminus postquem for great part of finds was 489, that's to say the beginning of the Gothic kingdom in Italy. Hence all artifacts found on Italian context must be con-



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nected with the Goths and also their distribution beyond the territories, described in the written sources as "Gothic". Bierbrauer tried something more – basically on these objects he determined the borders of Ostrogothic kingdom far beyond the administrative system of Roman Empire (Bierbrauer 1975).

The last twenty years marked the last phase in the skepticism, concerning the ethnic identification of archaeological evidences. In 1986 Manfred Menke published an article, sharply criticizing the approach of Werner and Bierbrauer. Most of his postulates are not accepted till today, including the comparison of territorial bor-

ders, supposed by Bierbrauer with the ones valid for Roman administrative system, since the political marriages, which Theodorich the Great had made, created a kingdom, exceeding the limits of this system. The core of Menke's considerations were some features within the context of the first collective find from Reggio Emilia and especially the low degree of wear of solids of emperor Zeno, found in the treasure:

1. According to these coins *terminus post-quem* for the treasure could not be the year 491 i.e. the death of Zeno, but an earlier one, also in the chronological limits in the age of this emperor.
2. Therefore the concealing of that treasure



could be bound namely with the march of Theodorich to Italy, which determined a *terminus ante quem* of 489

3. The artifacts, composing the treasure could not be dated in the age of Theodorich but at the age of Odoacer and consequently did not belong to Goths, but to unknown representatives of the heterogeneous group of Odoacer, whose exact ethnic identity is impossible to be fixed (Menke 1986, 245-248).

Hence other artifacts, determined from Bierbrauer as ostrogothic also are in doubt, Menke followed the system of Tejral and considered that many of the earlier dress elements, originating not only from Italy, but also other zones of East German attendance, could not be directly directed to ostrogoths, but only as "artifacts of ostrogothic type", since their wearers have been also other East Germans. Any way, following the principles of formal-stylistic analysis and the earlier chronology, predetermined by him, Menke recognized a great part of the Italian dress elements as such belonged to the Germans, lead by Odoacer (Menke 1986, 261-262).

As a result of this dispute were the recent several articles of Bierbrauer. He is agreed with Menke about the earlier date of Reggio Emilia treasure and supposed a "*Rechnenmodell*", calculating the middle term that a metal dress element could be in use. According to it, the duration of this period was not more than fifteen years. Therefore several German artifacts from Italy must be dated even before the age of Odoacer in 476. The Reggio Emilia treasure could belong as well to someone from the group of Odoacer, as well to the Goths of Theodorich "but if someone wants to use only one of both possibilities, then the possibilities of the archaeology would be overestimated". So these artifacts could not be identified in further as something more than "East German" (Bierbrauer 1991, 587-588; 1992, 274-275).

In the methodological approach, used by the historical investigation, often, the truth is hidden in separate episodes of the statement, but not in the whole process, presented by contemporary or later authors. In archaeology that is the part of the details. In our case this is the decoration of the East German dress elements or so called *Kerbschnitt*, whose main feature was the cut off ornamentation in relief. Originally it had been dis-

tributed through the bronze elements of the Roman military belts of the last quarter of 4<sup>th</sup> and early 5<sup>th</sup> cc. They were produced in the workshops of Upper Rhein and Middle Danube and their main distribution is namely in these zones, where some military units had their quarters. The brooches from Reggio Emilia, reflect a later stage of the development of this kind of ornamentation. The link is a group of brooches and buckles with high relief of the ornament and a scheme that clearly follows the Late Roman prototypes as well in decoration as in technical examination. However some of them were in zone in the stream of Tisa river, that has never been a part of the Gothic dominions, but belonged to the Gepidae (for instance the brooch from Répcelak (Kovrig 1979, 132, n. 39a, Taf. 39a). Their relation with the Pannonian workshops and the deference with the Gepidic cast *Kerbschnitt* demonstrate that they could not be of other origin than Pannonian. In this time, that's to say between 454 and 473 Pannonia was a Gothic dominion. The directions of Gothic migration show that they were the distributors of this antique style and spread its mode among the other East Germans. Its primary pieces originated from areas of clear continuity between the provincial Roman culture and the German one and these adornments appeared as product of this continuity. The next one is presented by the artifacts from Lower Danube, which already compose a large group. In stylistic and technical aspects they follow the Pannonian samples, demonstrating at the same time the possibilities of the local workshops - the low relief as often the ornament is partly cast and cut in addition. The brooches from *Oescus*, *Krassen* and *Histria* are the closest samples to the ornaments with *Kerbschnitt* from Middle Danube (**figs. 1-3**; *Oescus* - Иванов et. al. 1979, 24; Хараламбиева/ Ковачева 1992, Табл. II, 1; *Krassen* - Хараламбиева 1984, 45-47, обр. 1; *Histria* - Aurelian 1965, 68, fig. 1-2).

Gradually the ornamental structure is broken and changed. The ornaments on the plates of the brooches from the grave in the vicinity of *Oescus* ("Chiflika"), the pair from *Ratiaria*, the cemetery of *Singidunum* (grave n. 55) and a pair from National Archaeological Museum – Sofia are modest and simplified (**figs. 4 – 7**; *Oescus* ("Chiflika") - Хараламбиева/ Ковачева

1992, 47, Табл. II, 1, 2-3; *Ratiaria* - Tackenberg 1928-29, 267, Abb. 133с; Михайлов 1961, с. 41-42, обр. 3/6; Хараламбиева 1984, 46, обр. 1,а,б; National Archaeological Museum – Sofia - Tackenberg 1928-29, 267; Михайлов 1961, 40-41; Хараламбиева 1984, 47, обр. 2, 4, а-б; *Singidunum* - Ivanišević/ Kazanski 2001, 133, Pl. V,55,1). The decorative scheme on the lower plate is reduced up to one row of not well formed volutes and S-ornaments. The volutes of the brooches from *Oescus* (“Chiflika”) are double and set symmetrically. An idea towards the imitation of the well-known of earlier pattern of two symmetric double volutes or S-like ornaments (for instance Szekszárd (Párducz 1963, 29; Kaltofen 1984, 291, n. 297; Bierbrauer 1991, 575, Abb. 20, 7-8) and Sokolnice (Tejral 1982, 217, Abb. 94,6; 1988, 377, Taf. 59, VIII,23,25) could be seen, however the background is not clear. This model is represented on the plates of the pair from *Ratiaria*, but the space between is too large and an additional volute is added. The volutes on the samples from Sofia and *Singidunum* are more schematically. They are closer to the floral motives. The identical features could be seen on the footplates. The structure of the four-leaved composed of hearth-shaped elements rosette is broken structure, as the ornament is represented just like two symmetrical hearth-shaped motives with couple of volutes between. The narrow end of the plate ends with lengthways set volutes. The brooches from Sofia and *Singidunum* also have a totally simplified form. The “rays” are not profiled but plane cast. Another important element is also missing – the protruding frames of the internal ornamental field are not decorated with incised triangles, depicting the *Wolfzahnverzierung*. The footplate of the brooch from *Singidunum* ends with stylised human mask with mushroom-like hat. Ornament like this is typical for the later samples and has no analogies. In this sense this brooch is the latest one among the row of *Oescus* (“Chiflika”) - *Ratiaria*-Sofia-*Singidunum*.

The tendencies within this range of brooches demonstrate a clear indications towards a development of local style of the ornamentation with *Kerbschnitt* that is based on earlier patterns. The ornaments in low-relief follow preliminary set models, which are not entirely applicable on the

prepared brooch form. Except the flat treatment and the stylised eagle heads, the form itself does not change essentially.

Among this scope of brooches only the sample from *Singidunum* has a clear archaeological context. However the material does not allow a precise dating. This is the piece that marks the western border of the distribution of these brooches south of Lower Danube. The ornament on the sample from *Bosporus* is entirely identical (Kühn 1965, Taf. 63, 4,6). According to J. Werner this is a “Gothic Crimean” variant, including also the brooches from *Ratiaria*, that to say they are a product of Crimean workshops (Werner 1950, 164).

The new discovered material demonstrates considerable attendance of such brooches on Lower Danube area, than Crimea and this fact rejects the Werner’s assumption. The fact that the form and the ornamentation of the Crimean brooches are entirely cast has a decisive significance, because the flat *Kerbschnitt* of the Danubian samples is original (e.g. the ornamentation is cast). The brooches that developed their ornamentation on the base of the Middle Danubian pieces are typical for the character of the local East German jewellery in Thrace and Dacia. According to their evolution they could be dated in the first decades of 6<sup>th</sup> c. They reached the North Pontic area, where they were an object of imitation again.

Following this principle of tracing the structure of the ornament, at the end of this scope we could fix a brooch with unknown origin from National Archeological Museum in Sofia, *Ratiaria* and *Iatrus* (figs. 8 – 10) (Sofia - Хараламбиева 1984, 47, обр. 2); *Ratiaria* - Tackenberg 1928-29, 267, Abb. 133а; Михайлов 1961, 42, обр. 3,6; Хараламбиева 1984, 47, обр. 1в; *Iatrus* - Gomolka-Fuchs, 1991, 186, n. 762; 1995, 99-100, Taf. 2,16). The form as well as the decoration are entirely cast, and the motives are slightly engraved additionally with chisel. The ornamental structure of the both plates is considerably changed. The Sofia sample is quite similar to the one from *Singidunum*, but its lineament is cruder. The semicircular lower plate of the brooch from *Ratiaria* is decorated with three volutes, arranged in “running wave” motive that is unknown among the other samples from Lower Danube. The footplate retains its

centric decoration of volutes, arranged around a central square. Some of the volutes are not symmetrical, but follow equal ward. Total asymmetry is visible on the footplate of *Ratiaria* brooch. Four turned towards the center volutes are similar but simplified versions of the typical for the horizon Domolospuszta-Bácsordas. However the ornament is strongly deformed and remote from the original. The form itself is not entirely mould – the mounts are unfinished; the lower stylized eagle heads are merged with the whole plate without cleaning after the cast. This way of production and decoration is indicative about the brooches of second or even third “generation” that had developed their features on local ground, besides combining elements from several, known to the masters patterns.

The brooch from *Iatrus* is also a product of these later tendencies. The volutes are extremely schematical and entirely cast. The context – a level from D1 according to the chronological system of this fortress refers a date between 500 and 520-530, that is to say the brooch is coincident with the most “Ray brooches”. This fact could be an indicator that except the approach of the “regressive development” that has been used because of the unclear context, the parallel existence of expensive and cheap imitative brooches is also possible. These poor samples are evidence of the local workshops, where the masters could be of the same ethnic group as the wearers.

Any way the unity and continuity with the Pannonian samples is a fact that is missing in the brooches of Reggio Emilia treasure, discussed by Menke. In opposition - its elements demonstrate a similarity with the next group of artifacts, typical for Italy in the neighboring areas. In stylistic and technological aspects they belong to the next stage of the development of the style, whose features are most characteristic for the period of 6<sup>th</sup> c. - a date that is not of opposition with the chronological indicators of Reggio Emilia treasure.

The short chronological diapazones, determined by the important dates in the Pannonian and Danubian history of Ostrogoths - 454 - 473 - 489 seem to facilitate the dating of the artifacts, their style and territorial distribution. However the question is: Could we confide in their opportunities? The modern archaeology is in possession of various possibilities, including ethnic iden-

tification. However it must be cleared of any modern models and premises. The artifacts must not be taken for granted for someone’s identity but they also could not be treated with the “growing pessimism” of Bierbaruer and Menke any more. The necessity of theoretical model, which in equal degree to be applied towards the East German and Gothic artifact is obvious all the more that and becomes an important element of the Late Antique and Early Medieval culture of Lower Danube and the Balkans at all.

This model could be composed of two general elements:

1. A conformation with the conventionalities of the historical dates (454-473-489), which predetermines the assumption that the main part of the artifacts moved with their direct owners. This is the case when the appearance of some artifact in a cultural zone that is untypical for its common context should ever provoke astonishment. Exactly, that is the situation with the Pannonian samples inside the Gepidic dominions. Bierbrauer and Menke are unanimous that they could not be explained with political relations or trade, because of the permanent war between Goths and Gepids. They, as well as many other scholars see in these artifacts only evidence about how dangerous the attempts for ethnic interpretation of archaeological materials could be.

In this sense the second (2) element is additional and it may consider the assumption that there were cultural ways, which did not conform with the existing political and administrative system, which in the period of late 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> c. was not so adequate of the historical circumstances yet. After these cultural routes, whose main line is the valley of Danube, the elements of the East German material culture travel, being enriched in many aspects by the provincial Roman tradition. This tradition was also determining about the local features of the artifacts. Within these contacts the Lower Danubian zone took a mediate part and transmitted series of elements in the North Pontic area and the dominions of the Goths in Crimea. Their artifacts demonstrate a striking similarity with Middle and Lower Danubian ones in every aspect, except one - the technical examination, which again was predetermined by the local traditions. It is no use even supposing that they appeared there directly with owners of “first generation”, that is to say Goths who migrated

from Italy in the second half of 6<sup>th</sup> c.

If we summarize, then the model will be closer to the outlined cultural provinces of Gustaf Kossinna – Pannonia is a primary zone with vivid antique traditions and active workshops. Based on their *Traditionskern* the Ostrogoths forged there the new identity. They also formed in Pannonia the character of the artifacts, typical for their material culture in the next two centuries and they did it on the base of the antique tradition. The territories of Lower Danube and Italy are the secondary cultural provinces of their migrations, marked by the respective artifacts. Naturally there were other Germans within the Gothic union - Rugi, Heruli, Skiri, called by Procopius “other Gothic tribes”, but if the archaeologists determine all brooches and belt elements just as East German, the common role of the Goths as dominant ethnos within this process should be underestimated.

And finally, as the modern investigators could not answer the question “Do we know who were the Goths?” it’s right as their next step, the archaeologists to ask the opposite question “Did the Goths know who they are?” And according to my point of view the continuity of this problem hides into the investigation of their ethnogenesis without set up any borders of the archaeological approach.

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